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ABSTRACT

This issue of a quarterly publication of the Council of Europe covers aspects of the history, technology, policies, and impact of telecommunications in Europe, with an emphasis on European television. The following articles are included: (1) "Man and the World of Telecommunications" (Piet Stoffelen); (2) "The European Communications Satellite System" (Valerie David); (3) "Family Matters--The Birth of a Television Standard" (George Waters); (4) "Satellite Radio" (Thomas Alexanderson); (5) "Television by Satellite: Yes, But for Whom?" (Harald Wendelbo); (6) "Television: A Cultural Challenge" (Charles Imbert); (7) "The New Media: Complement or Competition?" (Francis Balle); (8) "Private Television/Public Television: The Debate" (Philippe Gavi); (9) "Private Television--A Challenge and a Necessity" (Josep Maria Casasus); (10) "Only Public Service Television Is Really 'Free'" (Marc Lecarpentier); (11) "Television and Advertising" (Paul de Win); (12) "Mass Media Unlimited: A Challenge to the Council of Europe" (Georg Springer); and (13) "Europa TV--The Real Thing from Hilversum" (Richard Dill). (MES)

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"To bring near that which was distant is also to make distant that which is near; it is to equate distances and create indifference"

Abraham MOLES
in *Théorie structurale de la Communication et société*, Ed. Masson, Paris 1986

"Communication extends man's senses to the ends of the world"

Norbert WIENER
in *Cybernétique et société* quoted by McLuhan in *Understanding Media*

Man and the world of telecommunications

It is a remarkable fact that, while the vast majority of Europeans are waking up to the crucial importance of the transmission and dissemination of information by cable or through space, few of them, I fear, realise what its effects—whether positive or negative—will be. I am talking not just about radio and television, but about telecommunications in general; and that is where I shall begin.

Paper remains the prime conveyor of "knowledge". In the not too distant future it will be replaced by electronics in such forms as laser-beam video discs, magnetic tapes and discs, semiconductor memories, etc. We are unquestionably moving out of the civilisation of "paper-based information processing" into that of "electronic information processing".

This development, which will extend into the social field, opens up prospects that are barely imagined: it will in fact make it possible, thoughout the world, to gain access to information on science, health or the economy. Our increasingly complex society will be converted, willy-nilly, to electronic data processing. The advantages are undeniable: simplicity of data transmission and the possibility of grouping and combining data.

For example, it will be possible to obtain a mind-boggling amount of information in one's own home by means of the telephone or by hooking up a home computer to a central system. Yet this development is not without risk to the human environment. The exploitation of personal data might be damaging to privacy or even commercial interests. The Legal Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly appreciates the danger and is currently examining the problem of data protection.

The audiovisual landscape has also undergone rapid change, and I say this with mixed feelings. I remember looking into the effects of satellite broadcasting in 1980, when I was rapporteur of the above-mentioned Assembly committee. Our work culminated in a report and a recommendation in which the Assembly referred

to the future developments that could be expected, and called for action by the Committee of Ministers. Such action has not yet really been forthcoming.

In 1981, through Recommendation 926, the Legal Affairs Committee emphasised that technological innovations such as cable television, video reproduction and direct broadcasting satellites would have a considerable impact on our national broadcasting systems, given the fact that it is possible today to receive foreign television broadcasts as well as national ones in one's own home, not to mention the even wider choice enjoyed by frontier areas.

These innovations are in themselves excellent. The possibility of picking up a range of foreign programmes by satellite or by cable encourages cultural and intellectual diversity. It also provides enormous scope for permanent European collaboration in the field of radio and television broadcasting. But it also has dangers. Clearly, national laws are powerless to deal with programmes that are broadcast or transmitted to a satellite which then serves a whole range of countries. Such broadcasts may be disseminated by a (fully) commercial channel or by stations answerable to a "foreign" government.

Though positive in itself, satellite broadcasting has to cope with three types of danger.

First of all, national legislation is usually applicable only within the country concerned. The member states can neither ask nor require that foreign broadcasts comply with their own rules. I need not go into the moral aspects: laws on the sale and commercial advertising of firearms, drugs, alcohol and tobacco are eloquent on this subject. The disparities between national laws are such that a programme may "penetrate" a country by satellite even though broadcasting it from inside that country's national territory would have been deemed illegal.

The second danger stems from the fact that every state has been assigned five television frequencies under a World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) treaty and that broadcasting, and television broadcasting in particular, can be a very lucrative activity.

In practice, it is quite likely that by the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s non-European companies (American for example) producing television programmes could succeed in purchasing one or more television channels in a member state in order to set up an entirely American commercial chain. Nor is there any reason not to believe that the multinational corporations will find new advertising opportunities through programmes that can be received over a large part of our continent.

The fierce struggle for advertising space results in a competition for the biggest audience, involving the payment of large sums of money for programmes that enjoy the highest popularity, have a target audience, carry no risks and are preferably exclusive.

It follows that it is not the viewers who select the programmes, but the financiers who seek to derive the greatest profit from them, inevitably to the detriment of quality.

The independence and artistic and journalistic freedom of television professionals is therefore threatened. Furthermore, other producers are faced with the alarming rise in the cost of programmes (as advertisers outbid each other) which they are sometimes unable to purchase because commercial advertisers have acquired exclusive rights.

The third danger is already well established. The cost of programmes is rising and competitions for viewers (the ratings war) is hotting up. The result is that programmes become poorer, bland foreign series proliferate and the number of domestic productions gradually declines.

What this means is that we are not seeing an enrichment, a deepening of the national and European identity and cultural values, but that we are moving towards "Americanisation", with an growing number of stereotyped, instant-excitement programmes. At the same time, the need for appropriate copyright regulations is becoming increasingly urgent.

Exploring space by balloon

The hot air balloon was invented in France almost 200 years ago. In 1783 the first hot air balloon was launched by the Montgolfier brothers; experiments were conducted for the first time with hydrogen-filled balloons, and the first free balloon flight in a Montgolfier was made by the Marquis d'Arlandes and Pilâtre de Rozier.

Ever since, scientists have been interested in the balloon, known also as a montgolfier or a dirigible, the device which is "lighter than air", for the purposes of studying the atmosphere. The altitudes reached by balloons and their nacelles, whether manned or unmanned, have steadily increased: 4 000 m at the end of the XVIII century, 7 000 m in 1804, 11 000 m in 1901 and 22 000 m in 1935.

After the Second World War, the development of plastic materials, in particular polyethylene, made it possible to construct very light balloons capable of remaining airborne for several hours without passengers at an altitude of approximately 40 kilometres.

This level of performance has placed the balloon in the forefront of the vehicles used in space exploration since 1957.

Usually balloons afford more possibilities than satellites and sounding rockets. In some cases, they can even be used to calibrate (ie to test) the experiments which will later be conducted using the latter.

Balloons are an attractive proposition because they are cheap, there is no real limit to their playload (since they have no predetermined shape and can support considerable weight), and, being easy to use, they may be left in the hands of a small team of specialists. Furthermore, no special infrastructure is needed to launch balloons, an operation which rarely takes longer than two hours.

Scientists who use balloons for their experiments have at their command a standard flight chain which includes all the equipment essential for the exchange of information between the ground and the balloon (coder and telemetric transmitter, remote controlled receiver), and for retrieval (beacon and parachute).

Balloons have the important and sometimes decisive advantages of not being subject to significant bursts of speed or vibration, and of being able to prolong the time of study of an environment which satellites and sounding rockets would only pass through at high speed.

They are currently used in research to carry a nacelle containing scientific equipment up to a specific altitude. According to the mission, this may either be a cosmic particle counter, a camera, a humidity detector or a pressure or temperature gauge.

In the main, balloons are used to conduct experiments in astronomy, meteorology, aeronomy, geophysics and biology.

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Engraving of an early balloon flight, Nuremberg, 17 November 1787

Piet Stoffelen during a vote in the Assembly Chamber

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has adopted countless recommendations warning of the dangers of this development and calling on the Committee of Ministers to take measures to safeguard the independence of programming and programme-makers *vis-à-vis* both financial backers and the state, and to establish an advertising code in order to monitor, preserve and, if possible, increase plurality and ensure a substantial supply of European programmes.

The response from the Committee of Ministers has been disappointing up to now, despite the excellent initiatives of the Steering Committee on the Mass Media. It is now urgently necessary for the 21 member states of the Council of Europe to take action, since the Commission of the European Communities considers that the problem of broadcasting is primarily an economic one. Let us hope that the European ministerial conference on mass media policy to be held at the end of 1986 in Vienna will succeed in adopting such measures. The freedom of the press and of television, and of intellectual and cultural pluralism in Europe, are at stake. ■

Piet Stoffelen
Dutch Socialist Member of the Parliamentary Assembly

The European Communications Satellite System

News of the sighting of the Spanish Armada was spread around Britain by the lighting of beacons on hilltops. Today, Maradona's goals in Mexico are beamed instantaneously into our drawing rooms. How are satellite communications in Europe organised to make this possible?

What happens when you pick up a telephone and dial a long-distance number? How do the images of an event taking place on the other side of the world appear on your television screen split-seconds later? We are so used to getting connected immediately with our correspondent or to sitting down to watch a World Cup football match that we no longer even stop to wonder how it has all happened. Yet only 25 years ago these possibilities were unheard of.

The advent of the space age with the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1, in October 1957, opened up hitherto unknown frontiers. Less than 5 years later the United States injected into low Earth orbit the very first commercial communications satellite, Telstar 1, and two years later, in August 1964, the International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation, INTELSAT, was set up.

Europe very quickly realised the tremendous potential of this new field. During the discussions which took place in the early 1970s on the future of the European space organisations, it was decided that priority should be given to communications satellites, with the result that, even before the European Space Agency (ESA) came into being, 11 European countries approved the development of a pre-operational satellite, OTS (for Orbital Test Satellite), for use on an experimental basis by European telecommunications administrations and by the European Broadcasting Union.

OTS was launched in May 1978 by American Delta 3914 rocket and, over the next six years, successfully demonstrated the capabilities of a European communications satellite system. So successfully, in fact, that many of its features have been incorporated into ECS (for European Communications Satellite System), the operational series of satellites.

The next step towards an independent European regional communications system was taken in 1978 with the approval, by 10* of the 11 ESA member states, of the ECS programme. ESA's role in this programme is to provide the communications satellites together with the facilities and equipment required to support their in-orbit operations. In short, ESA is responsible for supplying the customer (the telecommunications administrations) with telecommunications transponders in good working order in orbit. In particular, ESA's Space Operations Centre (ESOC) in Darmstadt, Federal Republic of Germany, is responsible for placing and maintaining

each spacecraft in its operational position, for monitoring all satellite subsystems and for taking corrective action in case of a problem or failure of any one of them. These activities are performed from ESA's Tracking Station (ESTRACK) at Redu in Belgium. The actual use made of the transponders is the responsibility of an organisation set up by the telecommunications administrations specifically for this purpose: the European Telecommunications Satellite Organisation, EUTELSAT, which becomes the owner of the satellites after acceptance in orbit.

First operational satellite

The first spacecraft in the system, ECS-1, was launched by the European Ariane launcher on 16 June 1983. After its separation from the launcher, the European Space Operations Centre took over control of the spacecraft and carried out a series of manoeuvres over the following weeks to place the satellite in its final operational position at 13°E in geosynchronous orbit at 35 800 km from Earth. After intensive testing the spacecraft was formally handed over to EUTELSAT in October 1983. Renamed EUTELSAT-1 FI, it has been in operational service since that time. It was joined in orbit in 1984 by a second flight unit, stationed at 7°E; two further spacecraft will be launched, bringing the total number of ECS in orbit to four.

The ECS system offers two main services: the transmission of television programmes to cable networks and international trunk telecommunications between the 24 Member Countries of EUTELSAT taking part in the *Conférence européenne des Postes et Télécommunications* (CEPT). The CEPT countries are spread over an area from Turkey and Cyprus in the south, north to the whole of Scandinavia including Finland, across to Iceland and south to the Canary Islands and the Azores.

There are three identical spotbeam antennae on board the spacecraft designed to cover the Atlantic, western and eastern zones of the above area. These are used both for the trunk telecommunications mission and for the transmission of TV programmes. One "receive" and one "transmit" Eurobeam antenna are used for the distribution of television programmes between the 28 EBU member countries covering the Middle East and North Africa as well as Europe.

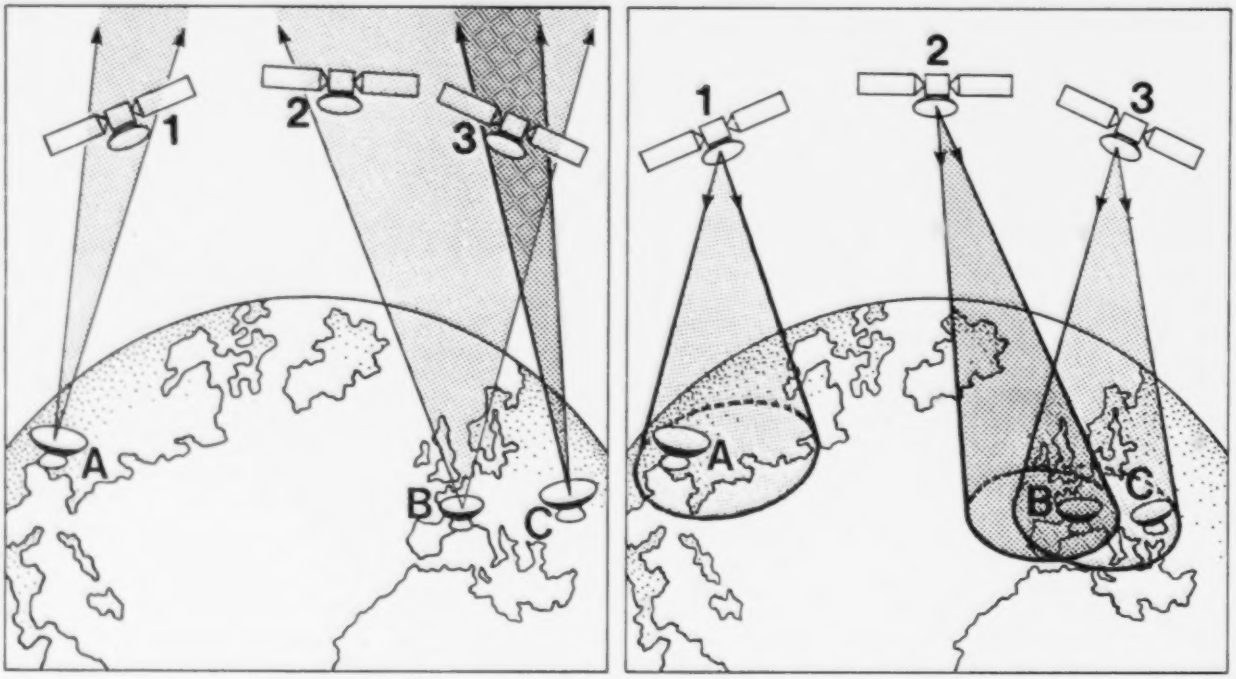
From ECS-2 onwards, a new service was introduced into the system. Known as "multi-services", it is designed to meet the ever-growing demand for high speed bulk data transmission, including computer-to-computer interrogation, high speed facsimile and video services such as video-teleconference facilities. The potential use of "multi-services" is vast and, as yet, not fully explored. The coming years may well see new users presenting as yet unthought-of demands which, because of the system's flexibility, will almost certainly be met.

The spacecraft were developed, under ESA management, by a European industrial corsortium consisting of some 36 major companies in more than 11 countries.

Maritime communications

The ECS system, which has been described in some detail above, was also the basis for the European Maritime Communications System, MARECS. Long-distance radio links between ships and shore stations are still far from satisfactory. It is surprising but true that even today about 90% of all messages to ships at sea are sent in Morse code. ESA's MARECS spacecraft form part of a worldwide maritime communications network managed by an international organisation called INMARSAT. The INMARSAT system, which, in addition to the MARECS spacecraft also makes use of Intelsat V satellites equipped with maritime payloads, provides a high-quality, reliable and real-time operational maritime communications service permitting duplex telephone and telex lins between ships at sea and shore stations. The first MARECS spacecraft was launched by Ariane in December 1981 and placed in service over the Atlantic Ocean; the second, MARECS B, which was launched in November 1984, initially co-

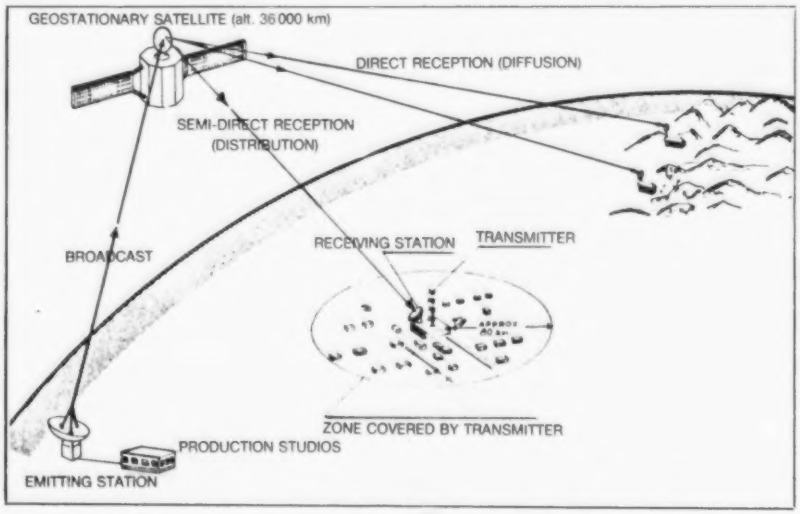
Television and football—a potent mixture! For a whole month, satellite transmission of the Mexico World Cup finals kept millions of European fans glued to their TV sets until the early hours of the morning



Because of the risk of radioelectric interference, only a limited number of geostationary satellites can be placed in orbit. This interference might also affect the ascending as well as the descending links.

Left: stations A and C are transmitting a straight beam towards satellites 1 and 3. In contrast, station B is radiating a very wide beam, which causes interference in satellite 3. In order to overcome this, it is essential either to place 3 and 2 further apart, or to narrow the beam transmitted by 3 (by using a more directional aerial).

Right: being too close together, satellites 2 and 3 will interrupt the reception of station B. To permit B to operate normally, it is essential either to improve the directivity of aerials 2 and 3, or to increase the distance between these two satellites in such a way as to enable each to transmit towards its own aerial without signals overlapping.



How can information be transmitted over very great distances? Two complementary techniques are available: one uses cables, the other satellites. The latter, the more recent of the two, is illustrated in the diagram: the satellite acts as a relay and operates at a very high altitude.

It sees simultaneously stations which are very far apart and can transmit between them radioelectric signals conveying various types of information: telephone conservations, television programmes, computerised data, etc.

Espace information

vered the Pacific Ocean region although it has now been moved to the Atlantic Ocean region.

ESA's efforts in the communications field do not stop here. It is also developing a large multi-purpose satellite, Olympus, which will be launched at the end of 1987. The spacecraft, which has an in-orbit mass of 1.5 tonnes, contains payloads for business services, direct-to-home broadcasting and advanced communications experiments. Studies are already being carried out for future generations of communications spacecraft including a European data relay satellite system which will be essential for communications between the Earth and the future space station which will become operational in the mid-1990's.

The telecommunications market is both vast and highly competitive. ESA's programmes in this field help to ensure that European industry remains at the forefront of progress and is thus able to play a major role on a worldwide scale. ■

Valerie David
European Space Agency

* Belgium, Denmark, Fed. Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Family matters – the birth of a television standard

Television broadcasting by satellite brings with it the need to establish news standards for the world market. The European Broadcasting Union has recently reached agreement over new transmission norms which will prompt the manufacture of a new generation of high definition television sets.

The advent of direct broadcast satellites in Europe creates an ideal opportunity to reassess the technological means used to generate and transmit television programmes. A fundamental element in this reassessment is the transmission standard—the method used to encode the luminance and colour-difference information that makes up the television picture in a form convenient for transmission to the home.

Since colour television was first introduced in Europe some twenty years ago, the SECAM and PAL broadcasting standards have been in use. Although these standards provide good quality pictures, their use presents a number of disadvantages. The existence of two standards (with a number of variations) has made the exchange of programmes between broadcasters more difficult. Some items of professional television equipment have had to be produced in two forms.

Transnational reception, where adjacent countries operate on different standards, is complicated. We have, of course, found ways of overcoming these difficulties, but this has meant additional expense, incovenience and quality loss.

As PAL and SECAM were devised in such a way as to be compatible with an existing European monochrome television system, certain compromises in the composition of the signal had to be accepted. These compromises introduced some imperfections into the picture displayed on the home receiver. As the technology advanced and television receivers became more sophisticated, the imperfections became even more obvious.

Satellite broadcasting offers a unique opportunity to introduce a new and more advanced transmission standard that, if universally adopted, will overcome the problems we now experience. After satellite broadcasting commences next year, viewers will have to make an investment in receiving equipment if they are to receive the new services. This investment may be for a new television receiver, with the necessary electronics included to demodulate the satellite transmissions, or it may be for equipment which would include an adaptor to provide an interface between the satellite transmission and existing receivers. In either case the new generation of equipment could include facilities to decode a new and more sophisticated television broadcast signal.

Search for a common standard

The European Broadcasting Union has, for some years, been co-ordinating efforts to establish a common standard throughout the continent of Europe. As satellite transmissions will not be restricted to national territories and in many cases will be almost pan-European in character, a common standard of transmission will facilitate reception throughout the whole of Europe. After some initial debate about the merits of digital signals and improved versions of PAL and SECAM, consensus favoured a new vision transmission standard commonly referred to as MAC or the Multiplexed Analogue Component system which was initially proposed by the Independent Broadcasting Authority in Britain. Although there was general acceptance of the MAC standard for the vision signal, some disagreement emerged over the form the accompanying sound and data multiplex should take.

The EBU favoured the C-MAC/packet system which allows for up to eight high quality digital sound channels (or equivalent data) in addition to the vision signal. The C-MAC/packet system requires a somewhat wider bandwidth than conventional PAL or SECAM, but it is a good match to the parameters laid down for direct satellite broadcasting to the home. However, the issue was somewhat complicated by the growth in cable distribution in Europe. Some European countries are already extensively cabled and ambitious programmes have been embarked upon in other countries. The plans that had been made in some countries for cable systems did not lend themselves to the distribution of the C-MAC/packet signal because of insufficient channel bandwidth.

However, an alternative form of coding allowing only up to four sound channels (or equivalent data) and requiring a narrower bandwidth for transmission is possible, and this is incidentally less demanding on certain receiver circuitry. This system is known as the D2-MAC/packet system and it can be used in narrow-band cable distribution with a small loss in picture quality in addition to broadcast transmission. Eventually, agreement was reached on a family of MAC standards with C-MAC/packet being, in a sense, the senior member of the family. A third member, D-MAC/packet, which has the same sound capacity as the C system, is included to cater for wideband cable distribution. The MAC/packet family offers considerable improvement in picture and sound quality, an increase in the number of sound channels available (either accompanying the picture or as seperate services), the possibility of broadcasting new data services and, in the future, extension to wide screen display. At the recent CCIR Plenary Assembly 1986 in Dubrovnik, a recommendation was adopted which stipulates the use of the MAC/packet family for EBU member countries.

Nine new channels

The first direct broadcast satellite to be launched in Europe will probably be for France and Germany, and the French and German administrations have decided to use D2-MAC/packet for their TDF 1 and TV-SAT direct broadcasting satellites. The current expectation is that TV-SAT will be launched in November of this year and that TDF 1 will follow three months later. (The recent failure of the Ariane rocket may cause a delay in the launch dates.) In 1987, the Scandinavian satellite Tele-X will be in orbit and the Scandinavian countries plan to use C-MAC/packet for their transmissions. Shortly afterwards, the European Space Agency will launch its Olympus satellite which will carry the programmes of Europa Television. Europa, a pan-European television service supported by five of Europe's national broadcasting organisations has announced that it will use the C-MAC/packet system. So the situation towards the end of 1987 should be that Europe will have at least nine new television programme services delivered by satellite directly to the home.

It is now imperative that industry produces a universal receiver capable of receiving all the members of the MAC/packet family. This will ensure that reception of all direct broadcast transmissions will be facilitated throughout Europe. Development on the new receivers is now under way and although initially some receivers capable of decoding the D-2 MAC/packet transmissions only will be marketed, at least one manufacturer has announced that by mid-1987 it will be launching its "universal" receiver capable of receiving all the members of the MAC/packet family.

New receivers

Receivers for DBS will take the form of small parabolic dishes with diameter ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 metre which will be mounted outdoors in the garden or at any convenient point on the house structure where there is an unobscured path to the satellite. The dishes will face towards the south 19° west of the Greenwich meridian in the case of the French, German and Olympus satellites and to a point 5° east in the case of the Scandinavian satellite. The cable leading from this outdoor antenna will carry the signal at an intermediate frequency to the television receiver. Ultimately, receivers availing of the full benefits of the new transmission standard will be self contained and will probably retail at a cost somewhat above the cost of today's PAL and SECAM receivers. Initially, however, "set-top" adaptors will be available which will convert satellite signals from MAC to PAL or SECAM so that existing receivers can be used. In addition, the set-top convertor will have a colour component output which will allow the red, green and blue signals which make up the colour picture to be directly connected to the television receiver if it has the appropriate input connections. Many receivers manufactured during recent years are equipped with an R,G,B input facility.

There is no doubt that programme providers using DBS will, in the initial years of transmission, depend heavily on cable systems to provide their audiences. The growth in individual reception will depend on the number and quality of television services channels available and, of course, on the retail price of the home receiver. ■

George Waters
Director, European Broadcasting Union, Geneva

Telecommunications aerial in Bavaria

Satellite radio

Broadcasting by satellite was born in the early 1960s. Although television may have provided the more spectactular demonstration of this new technology (watching events live from the other side of the earth gave TV viewers quite a thrill at first), radio has also profited from satellite technique all along. The 1986 World Cup in Mexico was brought to European radio listeners by satellite, and satellite technology is used daily in overseas news reporting as well as for major international radio events such as a 1983 concert transmitted from the Republic of Korea over tens of thousands of miles to radio sets in European homes. Thus satellite transmissions have become as familiar in radio as in television.

Radio, unlike television, has never been seriously restricted by national or geographical boundaries. Nevertheless, direct radio broadcasting by satellite would allow for vastly improved sound quality and reception.

The application of satellite technology in its earlier phases implied point-to-point transmissions whereby a broadcasting signal was transmitted from a central terres-

Antarès-Elecma/SNECMA aerial at the aeronautical centre, Le Bourget, Paris

trial location to the satellite and brought down again to another earth station, from which it continued by means of terrestrial circuits and was broadcast via the conventional transmitter system. Thus the signal was always brought to the ultimate consumer with a broadcaster as the intermediary. However, the new generation of satellites, the direct broadcasting satellites (DBS), employ a technology which allows individuals to receive the signal direct from the satellite into their home, providing they own a special dish aerial, or via a cable system to which they may subscribe.

On this score, however, television and radio have not kept an even pace. DBS transmissions today are suitable for television but not entirely for radio because of

Telecommunications in the space age

For reasons of efficiency and medium-term political and economic independence, more and more countries or groups of countries are deciding to equip themselves with an independent system of telecommunications by satellite. The United States, Canada and the USSR acquired their own systems several years ago, and Indonesia has followed suit with the Palapa satellite. Western Europe, India, the Arab States and Columbia have decided to start work on their own systems and plans are under review in Brazil, South East Asia, Australia, China and Africa. A veritable revolution is taking place in space telecommunications; this is both quantitive, as the number of links available throughout the world multiplies at a phenomenal rate, and qualitative, as new applications and services are introduced.

The various fields of application of telecommunications by satellite can be broken down into the following four categories:

● ***Point-to-point telecommunications for telephone transmission and television programmes*** *on an international, regional or national scale. It is in this area that most developments have occurred to date. These links depend on the existence, at each point, of aerials with a sufficiently large diameter. With the trend towards more powerful satellites, this field of application is expected to extend for use at national level, using aerials of smaller diameter, ie of the order of 3–4 m.*

● ***Data transmission,*** *associated with the great strides that have been made in data processing and with the consequent need for interconnections (telematics). The use of small stations equipped with aerials 2–3 m in diameter, linked to a satellite and installed directly in the user's home will permit the latter to have access to computers, data banks and a wide range of new services. This was the thinking behind the decision to install the French national system, Télécom 1.*

● ***Direct broadcasting of television and radio programmes.*** *Provided the satellite is sufficiently powerful, each viewer will be able to receive radio and television programmes directly by satellite; to do this, all that will be needed is a small diameter aerial (1m.) and a frequency translator. This technique will permit television programmes to be broadcast instantaneously over entire countries with no shadow regions, whereas the installation of land-based infrastructures would have required considerable capital outlay and taken many years to complete. As a result, France and the Federal Republic of Germany have both decided to equip themselves with a satellite of this type with 5 television channels: TDF-1 and TV-SAT.*

● ***Links with moving bodies.*** *The use of satellites heralds a new era in the quality of links with ships and aircraft far from their base; for example, American Marisat satellites with high broadcasting power are now used in shipping to construct a reliable network of links as part of the satellite shipping service. The European MARECS satellite will soon provide the same service.*

The advantages of satellite telecommunications systems

Satellites or, more generally, space systems, are now being chosen for a whole range of applications because they can offer the following advantages:

● ***reliability:*** *since it is impossible to repair satellites, techniques have been developed which ensure that they operate satisfactorily for very long periods, even up to seven or ten years;*

● ***quality of service:*** *transmission by satellite is of perfect quality for the telephone, television and new applications, irrespective of the distance between the points served;*

● ***speed of installation:*** *it takes much longer to develop a conventional television or telecommunication network than the three years required to construct a satellite which is capable, once in orbit, of providing complete coverage in television and conventional communications over an entire continent;*

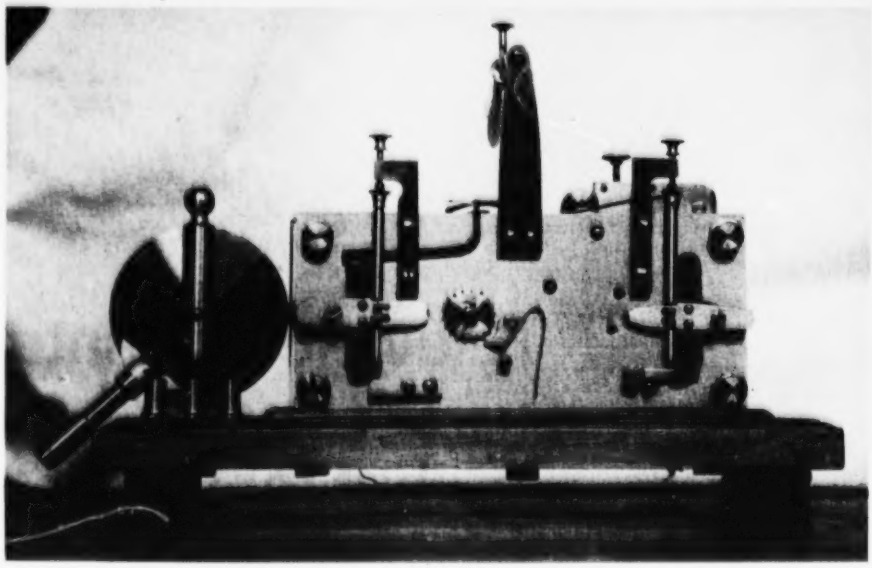
● ***simplicity of maintenance,*** *an essential point: a satellite requires no maintenance whatsoever; surprisingly little maintenance is required for ground networks where only 20 to 30 stations concentrated around the points served are used instead of hundreds or thousands of radio relay stations;*

● ***cost:*** *this is an important factor, in particular when using satellites for direct television broadcasting. Although the capital outlay on satellites for point-to-point telecommunications is comparable to that for conventional telecommunications systems, it is much lower in the case of direct television broadcasting. Furthermore, in all cases, the use of satellites reduces running and maintenance costs.* ■

Espace information

the different reception technologies applied in the two media. A TV set is, above all, a piece of stationary equipment and direct broadcasting is at present chiefly aimed at stationary reception by a viewer who gives his undivided attention to what is being broadcast.

Radio, on the other hand, is a medium to be enjoyed by and large in a different manner: a radio programme does not demand that the listeners be seated in front of their set. They can do other things while listening to the radio, such as walking around with the transistor set at home, in the garden or on a beach, and much listening does indeed take place in cars, trains or other forms of transport, thanks to the mobile character of radio broadcasting. It would not be reasonable to expect all radio listeners to equip themselves with expensive and bulky dish aerials to pick up DBS signals, since this would deprive them of one of the main advantages of the radio medium, its ability to serve the audience any time and anywhere. There is, of course, a place for high quality sound broadcasting from satellites to fixed receivers and, indeed, the proposed German direct broadcast satellite, TV-SAT, to be launched later this year will have provision for 16 high quality stereo services.



19th century hi-tech: Jordery's telewriter, 1898 (Musée des Arts et Métiers, Paris)

Crowded airwaves

Yet there is indeed an option open to radio in the field of DBS technology, although the reasons for considering it are somewhat different from those relating to television. The main attraction for TV viewers in having access to a DBS signal is that it offers them a more extensive choice of programmes than just those of their national broadcasting service. This is a problem that radio listeners have never had. For a long time they have been able to listen to radio signals from all over the world unlimited by regional, national or continental borders. But they have encountered another problem, namely the increasing density of signals on the air, which sometimes prevents them even from receiving their national radio programmes with acceptable sound quality. The deregulation of broadcasting, the recent growth of local and community (not to mention pirate) radio and the intentional jamming of radio signals have led to radio listening becoming less and less pleasurable than before. Music is the programme area particularly affected by these problems, and since music represents at least 60% of European radio output, the issue is far from insignificant.

Satellite technology could be used to overcome some of these difficulties if radio were allowed to transmit via satellite on a frequency on or around what is known as the 1 gigaherz band. This would allow not only for vastly improved sound quality but also for direct reception by radio sets anywhere, including mobile ones, without using the dish aerial, which is necessary for television DBS reception.

The item has been on the agenda of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for quite some time and the Union has brought the matter before the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC), the body responsible for the allocation of frequencies, suggesting that public broadcasters be given access to the 1 gigaherz band. However, certain difficulties exist because of the fact that frequencies in this band have already been assigned for other uses. The EBU is now pursuing the possibility of identifying a band of frequencies between 0.5 gigaherz and 2 gigaherz in which digital sound transmissions may not cause harmful interference to other services.

Pan-European radio

The issue will next be dealt with in a global context at the 1988 WARC Conference. In the meantime, a topic has appeared on the agenda of the EBU Radio Programme Committee which might well provide broadcasters with another argument in favour of their cause: the possible creation of a pan-European radio programme service.

In mid-May 1986 the participants in an EBU meeting in Munich were able to follow a satellite experiment in which a two-hour radio programme with a specially blended European content was produced in Hilversum in the Netherlands and transmitted by satellite to the meeting room in Munich. Using three languages, the programme included news, music, and traffic and weather information aimed at a multinational, European audience. As a first attempt, the experiment was, not surprisingly, affected by some teething troubles, but it sparked off a lively discussion concerning the prospects of changing and developing the format into a possible future pan-European programme produced jointly by public broadcasters on a permanent basis. It was pointed out that such a service might seem almost tailor-made for satellite transmission, with excellent sound quality, to radio listeners all over Europe. If technology permitted several sound channels to be used, this would mean that different language versions could be transmitted simultaneously. If combined with the so-called RDS (Radio Data System), recently developed by public broadcasters in several European countries and enabling the listener to pre-select a programme for a time or a language of his choice, such a pan-European service could make full use of the technical possibilities available today to broadcasters; providing, however, that the political will of the decision-makers controlling the allocation of radio frequencies were sufficiently strong and positive.

It should be emphasized, however, that discussion of a possible European radio service is only in its infancy. Thorough analysis is still required of a number of matters, such as the profile of the target group, the programme format, the financial structure and the logistics. But if viable solutions can be found, a programme service of truly European dimensions may emerge, taking full advantage of radio satellite technology for the benefit of millions of European radio listeners. ■

Thomas Alexanderson
Radio Director, European Broadcasting Union, Geneva

Television by satellite: yes, but for whom?

For years, the main concern over satellite broadcasting has been to overcome the technical problems involved. Perhaps the time has now come to think about the audiences of tomorow's televisions, particularly since it is they, in the end, who will pay for them.

Recent forecasts reveal that, by the end of the 1980's, European satellites will have a transmitting capacity of more than 1 million hours of broadcasts a year. The question thus has to be asked: who will be making all these programmes (broadcasts will have to reach a duration of about 10 times that of those currently produced), and do we run the risk of being inundated by non-European programmes?

Supposing that this threatening situation were averted—and significant efforts are being made in this direction by the Council of Europe and the European Community, there is still the last link in the chain: will the European television viewer be watching the new programmes? The question merits consideration because he (ie you and me) will be the one who will, in the end, pay for the entire operation—for reception equipment, subscriptions, licences, fees and advertising (all of which will make products and services more expensive).

To avoid confusion, it must be understood that "European television programmes" is an umbrella term, covering a wide variety of broadcast types, from the national television station which "overspills" into neighbouring countries, to multinational and mutilingual channels transmitted by satellite. Only the latter are truly European because they are aimed at a multinational European audience, being transmitted via a geostationary satellite either directly to the television viewer (DBS*), or indirectly by cable (SCATV** or SMATV***).

In theory, European television programmes can be broadcast to some 400 million Europeans, speaking 17 different languages, belonging to 12 different cultural areas in 22 countries.

This potential audience thus uses 12 different modes of expression, perception, behaviour and information storage. The cultural differences which separate or unite them may thus vary between 1and 8.

These 400 million Europeans already have about 115 million recievers and share around 50 channels, each broadcasting about 10 hours of programmes a day.

At the moment, only a limited, but increasing, number of individuals receive satellite programmes directly in their homes, by using relatively cumbersome and expensive aerials capable of picking up the weak signals transmitted by telecommunication satellites to cable heads. The cable networks to which these signals are, in fact, directed are being developed much more slowly than had been initially expected. In Western Europe, for example, there are still only about 10 million households actually linked to a cable network which is capable of receiving and broadcasting programmes transmitted by satellite. This figure corresponds to approximately 8% of households which have a television set; by way of comparison, 46% of American households have cable television.

Viewers' "time-budget"

Even if, judging by these figures, the future of European television seems to lie in DBS, the question still remains: who will be sitting in front of the television screen when the programmes arrive?

The fact is, the individual's viewing time is limited. In Europe, an individual spends on average two hours a day watching television, whilst in the United States the average is 4 hours, which appears to be the maximum limit. A further limit is imposed, paradoxically, by the cultural and linguistic wealth of Europe. This actually prevents satellite television broadcasters from transmitting blanket coverage over the European continent as the American networks do.

If a broadcaster wanted his programmes to go out (dubbed or subtitled) in the 17 languages of Western Europe, and thus effectively reach the entire European audience, he would have to juggle with 272 (17×16) linguistic "pairs"! Apart from the enormous overheads which would be involved, one can imagine the number of "odd" linguistic pairs this would produce.

The potential distortion of meaning in programmes would be considerable. The subtleties of language necessary for the reporting of news items would stand much less chance of conveying the intended message to a multilingual audience than when broadcast in a monolingual context. The misunderstandings that can arise from a simple interpersonal communication, when amplified to a system of mass communication catering for all the linguistic and cultural needs of Europeans, shows, by extrapolation, that the risk of distortion would be multiplied almost 100 times.

Break-even point

As audiovisual programmes seek to cater for the global mass market, they must also take account of the competitivity of European productions. Contrary to popular belief, this does not merely depend on production costs but, above all, on ratings. The break-even point for American pro-

ductions currently depends on them being watched by about 10 million households with television sets. A European programme would thus have to reach all of the homes with cable television in Europe in order to be profitable on the American scale, and thus competitive at international level.

Profit-making is also essential for future investment in satellite television. The costs to be recúperated are of the following order of magnitude: launchers and satellites will cost some £1 500 million by 1989, hiring a channel on a telecommunication satellite will cost £2–£3 million a year, and a DBS channel between £10 and £14 million a year.

It is, of course, "the market" for satellite programmes, that is to say, the European audience, who will have to foot this bill. And we will only do so if we are respected by television broadcasters: in our geographical dimension, our cultural diversity, our common denominators and our fundamental rights as European citizens. ■

Harald Wendelbo
Administrator, Council of Europe

* Direct broadcasting by satellite
** Satellite to cable television
*** Satellite to master antenna television

Television: a cultural challenge

Television—one of the most conspicuous activities in modern society—can no longer be ignored as a cultural medium of prime importance. However, it is in danger of becoming a conveyor of standardised culture.

What has long been considered as an accessory, a gadget or even merely a home amenity for information purposes or the broadcasting of social or artistic events, is becoming a cultural factor—or, as the pessimists would say, a factor of decadence. In reality, television, like language, can be a cultural challenge for better or worse, and this is what it is in many of its activities, whether voluntarily or, on occasion, involuntarily. Although it may sometimes be soothing, television is often provocative—provocative in the sense that it gives information and arouses interest. That being said, the new means of broadcasting and communicating throughout the world increase the complexity of television even further.

The question which should arise today even more acutely is what television is there to do and to say. In actual fact, however, the issue does not seem to have been put in this way by all governments and their officials, nor by private television companies.

Since the primary aim is to get an audience (and who would want to make television programmes nobody looked at?), programmes are becomming more and more standardised. The cultural challenge represented by television must not turn into a challenge *to* culture. At all events, television carries messages which influence and will increasingly influence trends in our societies one way or another. Either television will contribute to enriching our cultures or it will contribute to eroding them or to enabling some of those cultures to dominate others.

Daily battle

The cultural challenge is a daily battle preceded by an internal struggle between David and Goliath—in which David represents knowledge and sensitivity and Goliath represents government, both of them believing that they are working in everybody's best interests. In such circumstances the cultural challenge can sometimes be perceived, but only seldom—and, if we are not careful, increasingly rarely.

Undoubtedly there are outstanding events, such as broadcasts of major occasions, but the out-of-the-ordinary nature of a cultural message soon becomes part of life, part of the very air breathed by those to whom the messages are sent. Living in a world of painting, literature and music is a very different thing from the stardom of a composer, writer or performer. I am bound to mention the example of my own field, music. It has to be said how difficult it is in all television services throughout the world to get music broadcast. As far as I personally am concerned I have been lucky enough over the last four-and-a-half years to be able to present so-called serious music; but this would seem to be an exception. Why? Because, while the heads of TV channels sometimes display boldness, they do not seem to find it necessary to do so when it comes to music (with the occasional exception), because they themselves are not convinced of the emotional impact of music on television.

And yet, in spite of all obstacles, music is a challenge through its daily presence. This represents a victory for whom? Pure music—that is to say, music soberly presented through the playing of the performers—goes down very well on the small screen. Its presence on television makes it part of everyday life.

Use with caution

Suppose I put the question again: can television be a cultural challenge? I would say it can, because its strength lies in its ubiquity and its multifariousness. But—like certain other products—it must be used with caution. If television is a cultural challenge, it is also a medium for advertising and for everything which promotes selling. It is difficult to find the right dose, and the wrong one may be explosive—and a culture blown to pieces would be at an end.

Let us be optimistic and hope that those in charge of television of whatever kind are aware of the importance of their function over and above audience surveys and ratings and that they call primarily on the talents of cultured people and give them priority over the salesmen.

All that having been said, the various European organisations can give even greater force to this cultural challenge by showing imagination and encouraging co-operation between different television services. As chairman of one of the European Broadcasting Union groups, I hope that together we may produce programmes that are a real cultural challenge. ■

Charles Imbert
European Broadcasting Union, Paris

The new media: complement or competition?

The author divides the new media into two different categories and examines the effect they will have on our society in the long term.

Books and newspapers have long ceased to be the ideal media for freedom of speech and freedom to create, even though they are still, in our time, the chief symbols of those freedoms. Radio and television have, for 60 and 40 years respectively, been sailing the uncharted waters of entertainment, fact, fiction and information. The 1980s have seen the advent of techniques and technologies which have extended the scope of the old media and given them new potential, or which have bypassed or wrought havoc with those media before superseding them. What are these so-called new media—a term which encompasses both personal equipment and communication networks? Will they complement the old media or compete with them?

Local radio, cable television, "scrambled" television or pay-TV, telematics for all... if we look at the potential of the various techniques and the uses made of them, we find that the so-called new media fall into two categories.

The first comprises the recent techniques and technologies that extend the capacities of the traditional media, making it possible to broadcast or transmit texts, data, sounds and moving pictures, together or separately, to a scattered audience: cable television, semi-direct or direct broadcasting by satellite and varying combinations of cable and satellite.

The second category includes all the recent equipment that enables individuals to obtain access at any time, simply by feeding in instructions, to the services or programmes of their choice. This equipment is reminiscent of that described by Bergson in that it extends not man's hand but the capacity of his brain, which is linked to the functions of eye and ear. Services can now be obtained on request by means of home video recorders and video recordings in disc or cassette form, videotex, of which two versions have been developed —broadcast videotex and wired videotex —and, lastly, by means of facilities providing access to scrambled radio or television programmes, such as pay-TV and video transmission.

First to feel the challenge

The implications of the new media for the "communication of thoughts and opinions", to borrow the expression used by those who drafted the French Constitution, differ according to the category they belong to. It is national radio and television broadcasting corporations that have been the first to feel the challenge from cable and satellite technology. They are suddenly finding that they are not what they thought they were or what they wanted to be, and that they will not be so in the future either. They are threatened on two fronts: at home, by the designs of local radio and television networks, and from abroad, by the "technically inevitable" or deliberate "overspill" from foreign satellites.

The new media in the second category are generating a relationship between transmitters and receivers of "messages" hitherto unprecedented in the audiovisual world. There is an obvious analogy with

books and newspapers. It is not only access to messages that has been personalised through video cassettes, videotex and scrambled television such as is broadcast on the French channel *Canal Plus*; invoicing has also been personalised. This has meant that the audiovisual sector has changed from a supply-based economy to genuine market economy.

There remains the question of the future for these new media and for services available on request. In the short term, certain generally accepted ideas will be called into question. In the long term, it will all depend on the lessons which politicians learn from this experience. Not only are the new media exacerbating the programme shortage and audience fragmentation; they are also throwing up the eternal problem of the quantity and quality of what is made available to the public, by reminding the old media that a profusion of programmes is not necessarily the same thing as genuine consumer choice and by clearly stating the alternatives where quality is concerned. Should quality depend on careful monitoring by the censors, whoever they may be, or solely on the consumer, who is given ultimate control over the media?

Community before communication

Lastly, and most important, the new media can help to dispel illusions about "communication". What with those who dream of a global village and those who fear the electronic Gulag, the new media protect us from both fatalism and prophecy. They stop us from believing that the media, which are said to be all-powerful, will necessarily be acting for the better in the future, when they have acted for the worse in the past and are sometimes still doing so. And they remind us, surreptitiously, that community comes before communication, both logically and chronologically. What use is a telephone without an address book? What use are machines for "communicating" if people have not been taught, before they use them, to live together and talk to and listen to one another?

Only one thing is certain: the society of the future will not, as McLuhan thought a few years before the advent of the new telecommunications technology, be forged by the rivalry between the media, but will reflect the networks for interaction in society, which ensure interchange between people and between cultures. ■

Francis Balle
Director, *Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes sur les Communications*, Paris

Recovery of a Weston satellite during one of the flights of the US Space Shuttle "Discovery"

Private television/ public television: the debate

Television is one of the most effective instruments of power in society today. It is in the light of this reality that the arguments of supporters and opponents of public service television must be viewed. The three following articles present different aspects of this debate, starting with a description of British television seen from a French perspective.

In the country of Shakespeare and the Rolling Stones, there is nothing new about private television. When, in 1955, Her Majesty's Government decided to create a second channel, ITV (Independent Television), with private capital, the country was divided into fourteen regions, each one covered by an independent company with the exception of London, where two companies share the audience, one during the week, the other at weekends.

All these companies come under the Independent Broadcasting Authority, the IBA, whose 12 members are appointed by the Home Secretary, a procedure which would cause an outcry in France if only because, once appointed, these 12 wise men are no longer accountable to the government in any way. Concessions are granted by the IBA for a period of 8 years and are not always renewable. Woe betide

"Spacenet" telecommunications satellite

any company that fails to observe the very strict conditions imposed by the IBA, which in many respects are similar to the obligations of the French public service. Southern TV and Westward TV discovered this the hard way in 1983.

The IBA is also the owner of the private networks' transmitters and relay transmitters and has a word to say in the event of any financial restructuring or change of ownership. For example, it recently prevented Carlton Communications from acquiring 95% of Thames TV and blocked the Rank Organistion's takeover bid for Granada.

The British therefore prefer to speak not of commercial television but of "independent" television, a term much more appropriate to a mixed system that is privately financed but has public service objectives, obligations and supervisory arrangements.

The IBA has no shortage of resources: its staff numbers 1 500 and its annual budget totals £ 220 million, derived from the companies' contributions. The companies are grouped together in an association that decides on the programme schedules, which vary from one region to another. The five biggest companies (Central Independent, Granada, London Weekend, Thames and Yorkshire TV) provide 46% of the ITV network's programmes. News makes up 7% and Independent Television News (ITN), responsible for producing news broadcasts, is owned collectively by the network.

Channel 4

Another noteworthy aspect is the vitality of the independent sector. Every year it produces more than 8 300 hours of programmes. Purchases abroad represent only 19% of programmes broadcast. What is more, it was ITV that created the high-quality Channel 4, designed to cater for specific audiences (ethnic groups, trade unionists, young people, women etc). During the first two years the newcomer languished with an audience rating of only 4%, which led to it being referred to ironically as "Channel 4%". However, that did not in the least upset its directors who gave themselves seven years to break even. And they were right: Channel 4 subsequently took off, and today its audience is in the very respectable 7–10% range. Admittedly, it did not have any financial worries as the companies automatically pay it 14–18% of their annual advertising revenue.

Channel 4 is a venture that has nothing to do with patronage. It has enabled the independent sector to acquire a cultural image previously monopolised by the BBC, increase advertising time by 40% and secure about 55% of the British audience for private TV. Production has been stimulated too: Channel 4 commissions 33.75% of its programmes from the ITV companies and 24% from small independent production firms, the rest being procured in the form of material already produced or co-produced in the United Kingdom (17.15%) and abroad (23.5%).

There is no question of dominant positions being abused. The IBA ensures that companies' shareholders are highly diversified. No one may have a majority holding in a company or an interest in more than one company. Shareholders are mainly institutional investors (banks, insurance companies, pension funds etc), major publishing houses (D C Thomson, W H Smith), small investors (for example 17 000 shareholders own 41% of London Weekend) and groups. No press or advertising group can play a predominant role. Indeed, the owners' influence on programming and news is minimal. Any pressure on their part would provoke an uproar, and the IBA would review the concession.

Hard times for BBC

Conversely, the BBC, the public broadcasting corporation with its two television channels, BBC 1 and BBC 2 (the cultural channel), has been experiencing hard times in the past two years. Its image was damaged last year when its Board of Governors (appointed in theory by the Queen's Privy Council, but in actual fact by the Government) agreed to comply with a request by the Home Secretary and forbade the broadcasting of a documentary on Northern Ireland, regarded as too favourable to the IRA. Shortly afterwards, it was also learned that the counter-espionage services had an office at the BBC headquarters where they kept files on potentially "subversive" reporters and prevented their promotion. This caused quite a stir.

The crisis of confidence has been compounded by a financial crisis. The BBC derives its sole income from licence fees amounting to about £ 723 million annually. With this sum it must not only cover the costs of BBC 1 and BBC 2 (£ 450 million) but also finance four national radio networks. Now, £ 450 million for the 11 000 hours of televised programmes on BBC 1 and BBC 2 represents but half the budget of ITV and Channel 4, which broadcast 9 000 hours. As Mrs Thatcher refuses to raise the licence fee, cuts must be made everywhere, to the detriment of quality. Moreover, the audience is dwindling. How can the trend be reversed? By going "popular". No, in Great Britain it is not private television that shows *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, *Miami Vice* or the latest soap opera, *Eastenders*, but the BBC.

The BBC is probably still the best television company in the world, but it no longer has a monopoly of imaginativeness, irreverence and disrespect towards institutions. And perhaps that is not such a bad thing after all. ■

Philippe Gavi

(From *Le Nouvel Observateur*, June 1986)

Private television—a challenge and a necessity

Until very recently the defence of broadcasting freedom, ie of free enterprise and freedom of expression in television and the audiovisual media in general, was a political banner flown only from the most liberal ideological positions. In the circles closest to Marxist ideology and on the left in general, however, the state monopoly of television was defended as an impregnable bastion that had to be protected from any proposed reform or negotiation. The exclusive control of television by the state apparatus was regarded as an indisputable and unalterable fact.

Swift progress in the new communication technologies and the historical trend towards wider democracy have been undermining these uncompromising stances. The ranks of those who have always advocated the freedom of television have been swollen over the last few years by supporters of the state monopoly who have taken a more pragmatic view and bowed to the facts. Preventing free access to audiovisual communication within the frontiers of a given country was like trying to turn back the tide. It was absurd to ban private television stations in a country when programmes of all kinds produced thousands of miles away were beginning to arrive via satellite. The staunchest defenders of the single broadcasting organisation under government control have surrendered to the evidence. It is difficult now to find anyone in Europe who is still in favour of maintaining the old-fashioned state monopoly of television as it has traditionally operated.

What we are now witnessing in Western Europe is a crisis in the concept of public television which will result in a new, positive situation of freedom, competition,

creativity and, ultimately, progress. Whatever the final outcome of the crisis, we are going to see a move away from the present monopoly, homogeneity, uniformism and ridigity towards a new scene dominated by pluralism, diversification and variety in the supply of pictures, information, culture, ideas and entertainment.

The further pattern of European television will depend ultimately on the kind of transformation the state monopoly eventually undergoes in each country. The reform of the broadcasting system may mean simply that state television shares its market with private television, or it may also involve the total dismantling of the channels controlled by the public authorities.

Television as an instrument of power

The actual extent of the reform of the current European audiovisual communication system will in any case be determined by the power relationship between the various political and social forces in each country. Television is currently one of the most effective instruments of power, and this is the basic issue involved in the wide-ranging public/private television debate which has been going on in Europe since the last decade in all spheres of ideological, social, political and economic confrontation.

It is with this in mind that the changes of attitude observed among supporters of the state monopoly at the most crucial points in the crisis must be assessed. When the irreversible decline of the state-controlled television model left the all-out defence of the state monopoly facing inevitable failure, new arguments were sought to try and halt the onset of privatisation, new strategies were devised for keeping some areas of broadcasting under state control and new political schemes based on reformist approaches were tried out.

One of the ideas put forward by the theorists and experts in favour of keeping the largest possible portion of television under state control was that of the "public audiovisual area", which is based on three major principles:

- public service television should have absolute primacy over private television;
- the private sector can be entrusted with indirect management of the public service, but this should be confined to particular aspects;
- the design and construction of the "public audiovisual area" should be the responsibility of one or more public bodies which, depending on the specific characteristics of each country's democratic system, may or may not have links with the government.

Decentralisation measures

The controlled break-up of the state monopoly which is being experimented with in Spain seems to be based on this approach. The first steps in the process were the decentralisation measures resulting in the setting up of the "third channels", which are public stations operated directly by the regional governments or those of the self-governing areas (*comunidades autónomas*). The second measure designed to transform the old state monopoly into this "public audiovisual area", was the Bill to regulate the operation of private channels which the Socialist government introduced just before the general election was called. According to this document, what is required in Spain is a public television service which would overcome the rigidity of the state monopoly through the introduction of a new, flexible system in which private enterprise would be allowed to participate.

This arrangement would ensure that audiovisual communication is not governed by the kind of system developed in Great Britain, Italy or Belgium, in which the state and private enterprise are in competition. Those in favour of preserving the hegemony of the public sector in broadcasting are afraid that these liberal-oriented systems might eventually debase the idea of television as a public service.

In many cases, however, the bitterness of the debate between defenders of public television and defenders of private television has prevented them from seeing the risks, challenges and flaws of their own proposals, although they have of course exaggerated the disadvantages of their opponents' policies. Among the ranks of those who support public television, political and ideological arguments have been found to counter the offensives based on liberal criteria, but the attacks from progressive groups criticising the party-political, sectarian, dogmatic or tendentious bias of public television have been underestimated. The great shortcoming of public television is not that it is controlled by the state, but that it is controlled by the government. What the most dynamic and advanced sections of society regret most is that the resources of the public broadcasting sector are wasted on propaganda efforts pitched at the lowest possible level, on short-term operations designed to meet immediate electoral requirements, conducted by the minor officials of the party which happens to be in power at that time.

Among the ranks of those who support private television, however, it is very often forgotten that the maintenance of a sufficient quantity of good quality programmes in a totally free market requires enormous efforts in terms of production, technical facilities and professional manpower, which are only possible in a broadcasting system managed in accordance with rational criteria and provided with legal and economic guarantees to encourage effective action on the part of the most responsible and solvent business concerns. The proliferation of small television channels lacking the most basic resources would merely hasten the decline of broadcasting. Chaos and anarchy are no cure for the excesses of public television services dominated by crude party-politics. Striking a proper balance is the challenge facing us in the years ahead. ■

Josep María Casasús
News Editor, *La Vanguardia*, Madrid

Only public service television is really "free"

It would be pointless and dishonest to deny that the public broadcasting service in France suffers more than elsewhere from its unwieldiness, its ponderousness and sectionalism among its staff. Worse, wastage is sometimes rife there, as an Audit Office report recently revealed, and examples of escalations in production costs or of unjustified salaries abound.

Worse still, since hurriedly put together legislation introduced competition between the channels in 1974, their presidents have tended to be more interested in gaining publicity and audience ratings than in taking full advantage of the creative freedom which a privileged status allows them. Their eyes fixed firmly on the *Audimat*®, for some years they have been steadily reducing the element of research and innovation in programmes, all too often preferring undemanding, mass-oriented output that is unworthy of their role.

Nevertheless, despite its vagaries and the crude short-term calculations that have reduced its creative vigour, the public service is the only effective rampart against the relentless law of profit which slowly eliminates works of any distinction from television. No one, surely, would dare to

deny that culture—not the dusty, academic kind, but living, modern, creative culture—cannot thrive on financial interests alone. Examples abound, in Europe and the world over, of private broadcasting sectors whose programme planners, guided solely by the criterion of advertising revenue, long since forgot that television could be the most attractive source of recreation, information, entertainment and pleasure.

Opportunities for risk-taking

Therein lies the strength of the public sector: French television is unique in that, being protected from the kind of rating considerations that have priority on the private channels and immune from interest groups or lobbies, it has in many respects continued to offer outstanding opportunities for risk-taking, ambition and sometimes courage. Averty, Santelli and Lorenzi are names that delight the ear and linger on in our memories: they have continued to appeal to all audiences and at the same time assert their originality and cultural ambition. Zola, Maupassant, Molière, Diderot, Dickens and Duras: how many of these authors, in some cases little known to the public, have suddenly come to life in front of millions of enthralled viewers? Tanner, Goretta and Godard: if it had not been for Switzerland's French language public television, where would these now famous film directors have made their débuts?

There are plenty of other examples: television, operating as a public service, which, of course, has nothing to do with state television, is irreplaceable. Private networks can and must of course exist to counterbalance it, stimulate its work and help it to forge an identity. Yet only a strong, renovated and independent public service can withstand colonisation by the mediocrity which unfortunately prevails on many private networks.

Freedom?

Let there be no harping on the fallacious argument of freedom! Freedom to open the door or turn the knob, the freedom the new channels are said to offer us—this freedom looks very much like that of the hens in a henhouse watching the fox creep up.

A strong state might be precisely one that rejected the extravagant promises and specious arguments of the foxes as they prepare to pounce on the hens that lay the golden eggs represented by the public channels. A courageous government might be one that renovated, promoted and developed independent public networks while rejecting extreme, doctrinaire positions which, as we know from history, seldom offer sound advice.

True freedom can be neither bought nor sold. ■

Marc Lecarpentier
Deputy Chief Editor, *Télérama*, Paris

* *Audimat*: a device used for measuring the various channels' audiences in France.

Technician crossing the mighty Robledo II aerial in Spain. 64 metres in diameter and weighing 7 000 tonnes, it is as tall as a 21-storey building

Television and advertising

We live in a vision-oriented world. We all know that television is an effective means of communication because it adds the dimensions of movement and sound to the image, because it enables advertisers to demonstrate the benefits of their products or services. And as these products or services become more and more widespread in Europe and since there is virtually no pan-European press, it will be television that offers advertisers the opportunity to disseminate their messages throughout Europe.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that, when an advertiser buys television time, he is looking for an audience, and interested in a market assessed in qualitative and quantitative terms. Advertisers use television, like any other mass medium, in order to transmit their message as rapidly and effectively as possible, to the largest number of potential consumers, and at the lowest possible cost.

The debate on televised advertising has raised a number of questions, from broadcasters, consumers and advertisers alike. This article defends the position of the World Federation of Advertisers: in a market economy advertisers should have access to all the media.

Another factor to be considered is the choice of viewer. Viewers select programmes, not channels. The loyalty of the audience, and thus of the advertiser, will depend on the quality of the programme.

The publication of the EEC Green Paper *Television without Frontiers* in June 1984 has prompted numerous commentaries and declarations. The officialisation of the Community Directive resulting from the Green Paper is provoking further responses.

The Commission's philosophy is a reaction not only to the development of a common market in the field of television, but also to the existence of an ever wider audience. Not that the number of viewers will increase overnight; but, thanks to the Community, it will become possible to present viewers with a single message for one and the same product.

Advertising and freedom of expression

The Council of Europe was the first international body to point out that advertising, as the expression of a commercial message, is covered by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, in the same way as the expression of political ideas.

1. *"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent states from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.*
2. *The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary."*

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right in our democratic societies. This being so, we consider that the right of the individual to receive information of a commercial nature is as important as the right to receive social, cultural and political information. And if this right is to be reflected in everyday practice, those who transmit such information should have the freedom to do so. Yet this freedom is not unconditional. Freedom, every freedom, is limited by the requirement to respect the right of others.

A truly international medium

Television is the only medium which, through technological developments, can be regarded as truly international. And it is of great value to be able to deliver a single advertising message for a single product with the same packaging and the same marketing and distribution policy throughout Europe. And, when we say Europe, we are thinking not only of the Europe of the Twelve, but of all those countries grouped together in the Council of Europe.

The World Federation of Advertisers has supported the Commission in its effort to liberalise transfrontier television broadcasting, on condition that Community standards are restricted to certain basic rules. But this philosophy of liberalisation must at all costs avoid the creation of new barriers dividing Europe into two groups of countries: the EEC member states, and the rest.

For several decades the Council of Europe and the European Community have each been striving, independently, to establish and develop the European idea by closing the gaps between cultural, social and economic identities.

European industry

Europe will not become a reality until, regardless of frontiers, all Europeans have the same rights, the same range of choice, and the same opportunities for development. The development of the individual runs parallel with the development of industry in Europe. We should like to have been able to write "of European industry", but it is still too soon to contemplate a market of 400 million people. We are still thinking in terms of national markets.

Europe's strength resides in its technical and intellectual capacities. Europe's weakness lies in the way these capacities are exploited. We still see too many barriers, too much protectionism, too much nationalism.

Today, we are seeing the beginning of a spectacular development in communication techniques, mainly in the audiovisual sphere. What we have already seen is only the tip of the iceberg, yet some people are already seeking to regulate future developments. However, whilst present circumstances must inevitably play a part in forming our attitudes, we should keep an open mind regarding these developments.

There can be no doubt that advertising provides an essential stimulus for the economic and social development of the European market. It should thus be acknowledged that it has a part to play in the development of the European idea. ■

Paul de Win
Director General, World Federation of Advertisers, Brussels

The World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)

founded in 1953, is the only professional organisation to represent advertisers in all international bodies. Its mission is to defend—and, if possible, extend—freedom of expression in trade matters and freedom of advertising, throughout the world.

The WFA, which has consultative status with the Council of Europe, has often had the opportunity to present its view to the various Council directorates, and has taken part in the work of such groups as the Steering Committee on the Mass Media and the Directorate of Human Rights.

On account of its international scope, the Council of Europe's work has had a wide audience, not only in Europe, but also throughout the world. Particular mention should be made of the Declaration on the Freedom of Expression and Information, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 April 1982, and the recommendation adopted on 23 February 1984 on principles on television advertising.

The WFA has always taken the view that if the manufacture and sale of a product or service is permitted by law, it should automatically be entitled to be advertised. But this advertising must always be fair and truthful. This principle is in fact a restriction in itself, in accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, since it is necessary in a democratic society if the rights of others are to be protected—in this case, the right of the consumer to receive information on products and services, information which must be correct and free from misleading statements.

Consequently, the WFA entirely endorses the text of the explanatory note setting out the principles applicable to televised advertising: the corollary of advertisers' freedom of expression and information is that they must show social responsibility.

Wall display using video monitors

Mass media unlimited: a challenge to the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's first ministerial conference on mass media policy is due to take place in December in Vienna. Its general theme will be "The future of television in Europe". The author examines the Council's potential role in establishing a common West European Media policy.

The unbounded commitment of the Council of Europe's member states to freedom of expression and information as essential elements of pluralist democracy finds expression in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and in the declaration issued by the Committee of Ministers on 29 April 1982. In spite of all the differences between the nations, however—and in complete contrast to the position with regard to other aspects of human rights and basic freedoms—that commitment is based not on a purely formal interpretation of such freedom but on fundamental and far-reaching consensus among the member states about its substance.

Considering how much the free, independent media—with their guaranteed right to operate—contribute to democracy and international communication, freedom of information cannot be regarded as "just" a basic right in itself: it is important to realise that such freedom is a virtual prerequisite for the exercise of many, if not all, of our other fundamental rights. Obviously, however, the introduction of modern technologies, particularly new transmission techniques, opens up undreamt-of opportunities, though it also carries great risks to pluralist democracy in general and to the effective exercise of individual rights and freedoms.

The last few years have seen broadcasting technology (both radio and television) take apparently unlimited strides forward under the banner of the "new media". In an age of satellite telecommunications and direct broadcasting, video systems and discs, teletex, videotex, etc, terrestrial and synchronous broadcasting of complete, unaltered radio signals practically dates back to the stone age of the media. The breathtaking speed of development usually provokes reactions among media policy-makers ranging from spontaneous irrational rejection to uncritical and unreserved approval, via open or disguised scepticism. The only attitude encountered throughout Western Europe is the truly fatalistic: "Somehow we've got to cope with this".

Reactionary consensus

This approach is in fact the starting point for almost all West European thinking on media policy, so that although individual media policy decisions have been made on that basis and differ from state to state, it really can be regarded as the main plank of a European media policy. As a result, however, West European media policy is disintegrating into a more or less reflex reaction—mostly national, since there is virtually no international co-ordination—to galloping technical developments which such a policy can monitor but not foresee or even influence. Critical study of the Green Paper *Television without Frontiers*, of 14 June 1984, shows that the Commission of the European Communities also has to take the member states' basic consensus as its starting point, thus arriving at the "reactionary" media policy described.

The continued expansion of new transmission technologies, especially satellite and cable telvision, has now led to a shift in thinking on two questions:

Firstly, in the face of—largely imported—technical developments, national and international opinion has come to see the need for a long-term, forward-looking and above all co-ordinated European media policy.

Secondly, however, awareness has grown in recent years that Europe—not just for economic reasons, but primarily in furtherance of its cultural and other social policy interests—ought to resist "Americanisation and Japanisation" of the media market and make use of its undisputable lead in software to win access to new markets, thus promoting the production of programmes and the furtherance of technical development in Europe.

However, competitiveness can be achieved through European co-operation only if great efforts are made to harmonise media policy and law, while leaving the broadcasting agencies completely independent and avoiding any interference with their management. If there is to be a European media policy for the future, in the shape of a strategy, the Western European states must be genuinely ready to discuss their ideas for it, with a view to eventual co-ordination.

More suitable forum

One reason why the Council of Europe is now joining in discussion on media policy is that the Green Paper already referred to, *Television without Frontiers*, triggered off a lively debate inside the European Com-

munity about the future of television in Europe. But the Green Paper's call for a common television market in the EEC has hardly been welcomed with open arms in some of the important member states, and this, no doubt for tactical reasons, has led to the suggestion that the Council of Europe is a more suitable forum for discussing a common West European media policy. It seems, in fact, that it is only under the Council of Europe umbrella that it will be possible to hold such extensive, Europe-wide discussions, with a view to harmonising the development of policy and law on the media.

Most importantly, only at the (numerically) "superior" level of the Council of Europe can we be certain that a future European media policy will take sufficient account of shared cultural features and languages and of the smaller states' interests. This is all the more obvious if you consider the various language areas of Western Europe, many of which include both members and non-members of the EEC.

But the prime reason for asking the Council of Europe to lead the way to a future European media policy is the work it has already done in this field. This work is most visible in the shape of Committee of Ministers recommendations—prepared by the Steering Committee on the Mass Media (CDMM) and its committees of experts—particularly the last two: Recommendations R (86) 2 (on principles relating to copyright law questions in the field of television by satellite and cable) and R (86) 3 (on the promotion of audiovisual production in Europe), which are especially topical. All these recommendations have been based upon extensive studies, intended to provide not only factual information but also guidance in the shaping of media policy.

The setting up of the CDMM is not the only evidence of the particular importance attached by the Council of Europe to broadcasting in recent years, and of the growing interest shown by the Committee of Ministers in the political dimension and significance of the mass media. The Ministers' interest is clearly expressed in their Declaration on freedom of expression and information of 29 April 1982, which was mentioned earlier. This document, is fundamental to media policy.

It would certainly be premature to expect the Vienna conference, the very first on the mass media, to produce definitive, conclusive results in terms of a common European media policy. But the ministerial conference does provide an opportunity to launch the policy discussions which the very speed of technical developments in the media makes essential. The results from Vienna should provide a basis on which to start European co-operation on media policy, for which long-term goals should then be set. So the conference, which will be under great pressure to succeed, is a challenge not only to media policy-makers from Western European states but also to the Council of Europe, whose European policies will be under scrutiny. ■

Georg Springer
Oberrat, Vienna

Europa TV—the real thing from Hilversum

Europa TV has been transmitting to audiences in thirteen European countries from its base in Hilversum since October 1985. To continue offering a truly European service it now needs firm financial and political backing.

My French grandson is named Angelo after an Italian grandfather. My daughter Ricarda has won a language grant for the summer holidays in Florence. My mother began visiting the Romanesque cloisters of Provence at the age of 75. In the last 20 years, our family has taken on over a dozen *au-pair* girls from eight different countries. Six of them have stayed on in Germany, and three have married there (or should I say: here?). My tie comes from England, my jacket from Italy, my car from France and my shoes from Switzerland. My Dutch friend, who is working with me on the European television station, drives to Portugal on holiday in his German car.

Even if soccer fans occasionally give a different impression, the number of people whose lives go beyond national boundaries and who no longer regard themselves, culturally and economically speaking, as citizens of a single country is growing constantly. Television and the media no longer have to "encourage the European idea", but instead to illustrate how Europe has long become a reality for an increasing number of people in more and more areas, whether in department stores, children's toys or concert halls.

I am a John Le Carré fan, and I picked out the following titbit from his latest Eurothriller *A Perfect Spy*: "We are patriots because we are afraid to be cosmopolitan, and cosmopolitan because we are afraid to be patriots." More and more people want to be at home in Europe but without abandoning their own country. If the inhabitants of Hawaii, Alabama, Puerto Rico and New York can share a common country, why not those of Cork, Lower Bavaria and Sicily?

Wilhelm Hahn, the Conservative European patriot from East Prussia who unfortunately has left the European Parliament because of his advanced age, put the problem of the European media in a nut-

shell: "If Europe exists, then we also need European television." European television is the expression of the hope and, indeed, the certainty that increasing numbers of people are interested in how their neighbours deal with the nuclear energy crisis, the dearth of priests and the glut of physicians. People who are no less interested in the Edinburgh or Besançon festival than in those at Salzburg or Bayreuth. Who on boarding an Airbus reach not only for the local newspaper but also occasionally for the *International Herald Tribune* or *Le Monde*. Who do not automatically stop listening when they hear another language. Who do not confuse a neighbouring country with a holiday resort. Who like to hear the voices of Marlene Dietrich and Gregory Peck in the original, with subtitles. Who will let themselves be touched by other cultures without immediately feeling that their own is being threatened.

Founding members

It is for these people that European television will exist. A taste of that has already been given by Europa TV, the multilingual joint station from Hilversum that began transmitting on 5 October 1985 and is now distributed by cable in 12 European countries and in Portugal by earth station.

Europa TV was founded by five members of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU): the Dutch NOS, the Irish RTE, the Portuguese RTP, the Italien RAI and the German ARD. They are in the process of proving that the public broadcasting corporations—those which feel obliged to serve the general public and not just parts of it—are also capable of innovating in the satellite era and can offer a programme that attracts viewers and uses existing experience without destroying what exists already.

Of greater value to the smaller countries, the station will do no harm to the larger ones. In the future, the national stations of the big, rich countries will be able to broadcast Europe-wide anyway—everyone will be able to watch BBC, for example. They will find ways of broadcasting programmes in their own language and culture beyond their national boundaries. Countries with the same language are joining forces to create stations: TV 5, Drei Sat and Eins Plus.

But there will and must be another station in which all can take part and have their say. It will not be a station dominated by one view, centralised or export-oriented. Europa TV is such a station—the real thing. It answers the longstanding question as to what should take precedence in a European TV programme: aspects that unite and join us, or valuable differences worth keeping. The answer is a resounding "both".

> "... at a time of 30 and more competing channels, many of them only interested in Europe as a market, there can only be minority audiences. When these minorities go beyond national boundaries, however, they grow into large groups."

All this lies behind the call for a "Europe of regions" by Dietrich Schwarzkopf, ARD's programme director, chairman of Europa TV, who has also brought a European flavour to ARD.

Only minority audiences

A minority station, to be sure. But at a time of 30 and more competing channels, many of them only interested in Europe as a market, there can only be minority audiences. When these minorities go beyond national boundaries, however, they grow into large groups. Once the ESA direct satellite, Olympus, which is already booked, enables Europa TV to cover all of Europe as from 1988 for both cable customers and owners of satellite dish antennas, small viewing audiences of 2 or 3% will dwarf most of today's big national audiences.

Europa TV admits that its programme still has certain shortcomings. There are still not enough programmes for which European rights are available. There are still too few journalists and programme makers able to write and produce with a view to the audience in several countries. There are still too few viewers urging their local cable companies to include Europa TV. Not until sometime in 1986 will we be able to start operating with the technology and equipment that will enable us to create a unique product—a programme using several language channels (English, Dutch, Portuguese and German at present)—as well as our own current affairs services and news programmes. We shall also make better use of Eurovision's programme pool in sport, for example.

The hypocritical question is constantly raised why we offset inadequate resources through advertising. We must, because the small countries, for which Europa TV is a kind of Noah's Ark on which they can seek refuge from the transcontinental flood of commercial TV, do not have resources of their own. We need to make our programmes and continue those that are in danger of dissappearing, not to keep shareholders and investors happy. We are a public station that relies on commercial receipts but is not profit-oriented. Talk of contradiction if you will. Our goal is a full programme in the tradition of public broadcasting: information *and* entertainment *and* culture.

Active support

We regard the general non-committal pat on the back ("a good idea, keep it up, keep us posted") as increasingly unproductive. Europa TV has acted on the resolutions of the European Parliament and has found investors prepared to create a genuinely transnational television. Now it needs the active support of those who prefer this kind of programme to the other on offer: financial help from the European Parliament and the European Commission—especially for making the different language versions; support from national politicians in charge of media policy, so that Europa TV will be given access to the national cable systems under conditions that allow for its public character; support by national broadcasting stations that face an ongoing and growing demand for programmes, staff and production resources.

What about opposition to a European station?

Some people say that the idea is good but impossible to put into practice; the time is not yet ripe; the project is too expensive, too complicated and inadequately prepared.

Others say that although it is possible, it is undesirable, because it poses a threat to national stations and encourages European-wide uniformity. Yet others regard it as possible and desirable, but only if they themselves can have complete control.

Then there is another group that represents the greatest challenge to us: the model Europeans, the perfectionists who would rather have no European station at all than an embryonic one that does not do justice to all their dreams, visions and requirements.

Forced to choose between a superstation that satisfies everyone, but which does not exist, and an imperfect one that does exist, we opted for the latter.

Now the decision is in the hands of the European viewers I referred to at the outset. But they can only decide if they are allowed to make their own judgement unhindered. ■

Richard Dill
Journalist, Europa TV, Hilversum